

National Parks And Recreation Month

By John Worley

The month of June, in a proclamation signed by President Carter, has been designated as National Parks and Recreation Month.

Recreation and the pursuit of leisure-time activities is certainly not restricted to any given time period within the year, but rather is an ongoing, 12 months per year proposition for millions of Americans. However, special emphasis is placed on recreation during the month of June to identify and place a high profile on our basic human need-recreation.

While needs and preferences for recreational activities vary from individual to individual, we all have a basic, innate need, both physically and psychologically, to partake in recreational activities of some form or another. In order to fulfill this need, Americans spend billions of dollars and considerable time seeking out leisure time activities and entertainment.

There are, however, some individuals who feel they neither have the time, money or need to recreate. While this attitude may not be prevailing in nature, it is held by a surprisingly large number of individuals. Recreation need not impose financial burden, nor does it necessarily require large allotments of time. Individuals who do not participate because of the time/money factors are depriving themselves physically, psychologically, emotionally, and culturally.

There are a multitude of recreational activities that cost little or no money. There are varying forms of leisure activities that may be tailored or adapted to one's individual and family needs and budgets.

Municipal recreation departments offer a wide spectrum in variety of structured and non-structured recreation programs, activities, and events at minimal or no cost. Also, there are thousands of federal, state, county and municipal recreational areas for specialized and passive use throughout our country.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts alone offers approximately 2400 sites that include "intensive" recreational facilities. The Department of Environmental Management, the commonwealth's largest land holding agency, administers 231,084 acres of recreational land and facilities. There are 566 areas within our state classified as "exceptional" natural and cultural landscape features.

The commonwealth, by virtue of geophysical and graphic placement, offers a wide range and broad scope of recreational opportunities and advantages. The Department of Environmental Management has identified the three most popular recreational activities in our state as bicycling, nature walking and swimming. It is interesting to note, and perhaps significant that all three of these activities are "lifelong" activities that require little financial encumbrance. Lifelong activities are those types of activities

Commentary

that do not necessarily diminish or cease because of advancing age of the participant. It is important that individuals develop "lifelong" recreational activities along with, and as a supplement to, other recreational pursuits that may have to be severely adapted or entirely abandoned as we age. After all, we spend much of our working lives preparing and planning for our retirement, likewise, an integral part of that planning should involve itself with the creative use of our extended, post retirement, leisure time.

In summary, the need to recreate is both universal and essential throughout our entire lives. Individuals of all ages are encouraged to take advantage of our multiple resources and opportunities. To this end, the Cohasset Recreation Department will offer free, individual and family consultations to any residents who wish to further explore or specifically design recreational and leisure-time activities best suited to their needs, interests, and time. Recreational habits, preferences and choices begin, as do most of our social traits, at a

young age, and due consideration should begin at a young age.

Recreation knows very few, if any, boundaries in regard to content and age. It is, however, imperative that we

plan our participation, determine the preferences that most appeal to us, and set aside the time needed to assure quality and continuity to one of our most basic and essential needs — recreation.

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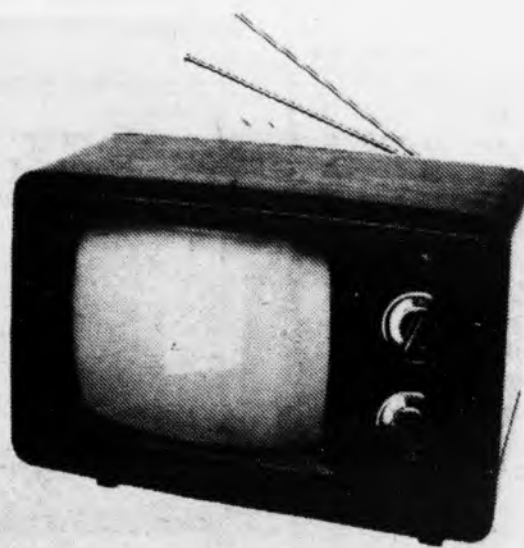
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